



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW

JANUARY, 1897

“THE MISSION OF JUDAISM.”

THE editors of the JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, desiring to collect in these pages the opinions of various persons upon the conception of the “Mission of Judaism” which I submitted in the October number of the *Fortnightly Review*, have invited me to preface those opinions with a brief summary or recapitulation of what I have written on this subject. In complying cordially with that request it seems necessary to observe that I am, for the most part, unacquainted with the nature of the opinions which are being gathered.

Slowly and surely the conviction has grown upon me that here in England and in our own generation it is possible and reasonable to make some beginning in the active propagation of the Faith of Israel beyond the confines of the Jewish race.

The considerations which induce the belief that such a movement is both possible and reasonable are twofold. First and foremost, the apprehension of the Deity and of human responsibility which the Jews have inherited and developed, are such as are appropriate and adaptable to non-Jews as well as to ourselves. They are intrinsically religious ideas of human, and therefore of universal, character.

Secondly, there is indisputable evidence of the fact

that large numbers of Englishmen, especially of the educated classes, are in need and in quest of a religion which is at once Monotheistic and historical.

I have argued elsewhere that scepticism and agnosticism are not permanent traits in the English character. They appear at the present time in no small volume, and are spread widely, not alone among the thinking classes, but even to a greater degree among the half-educated. One of the effects of the spread and growth of national elementary instruction, as well as that of higher education, has been the loosening of certain chords which bound large populations either to the national Church as by law established, or to the many non-conformist sections of Christianity. From the Reformation onwards Christianity has ever, in one manner or another, exercised in its dogmatic aspects a direct authority over the mass of Englishmen. If the social idealism of the New Testament was less in the air a generation ago than now, the theological creed had a firmer grip. Whether for good or not it dominated the popular institutions.

All this is changing. A good deal of it has already changed. It is a mere platitude to refer to such an incident as the outcry twenty-seven years ago, when one of the contributors of the *Essays and Reviews* was appointed a bishop, and the complacency with which, not many years later, the same writer was translated to the important see of London¹. This is only one of many typical cases which might be cited to prove that those dogmas of Christianity which chiefly differentiated it from Judaism are no longer held with as much tenacity as formerly by those who are still identified with the Church of England. The development of Unitarianism has steadily grown in this country,

¹ Since these words were written one notes with satisfaction that the same prelate (Dr. Temple) has been nominated to the Primacy. One of the contributors to the *Essays and Reviews* thus becomes the chief pastor of the Church of England. Who could have foreseen this change in religious public opinion when that important volume was published?

though it has never become, in the ordinary sense, popular. The independent Theistic movement of the Rev. Charles Voysey has penetrated far beyond the four walls in which he preaches. Societies of ethical culture, detached from religious worship, have been formed more recently still. But beyond Unitarianism as it is known by its actual places of worship, and beyond Mr. Voysey's church and wider circle of readers (his weekly sermons are printed and circulated in large numbers), and away altogether from every known organization, there are numerous people who are not Agnostics or Atheists, but who are estranged from the formulated doctrines of Christianity. Many of these persons are endowed with the religious temperament, but they are unfamiliar with the inner faith of any creed in this country except that of the prevailing types of Christianity. I propose that we, the people of Israel, should make some effort to place the inner spiritual life of Judaism within the reach of such persons.

I have heard it said at the mention of this proposal that the Synagogue is already open to visitors and we are always willing to welcome them. The answer to that is this: A religious organization, whether we call it a Church or a Synagogue, if it is to gather to itself recruits of any kind, must offer them, not the hospitality of guests, but the habitation of a home. When we consult the ideals of the Hebrew prophets we find that it is nothing short of this. The second Isaiah said of such people, “I will give unto them a place and a name within my house and within my walls better than of sons and of daughters” (lvi. 5).

Whatever may be said of the scheme I have propounded it cannot be urged that it is contrary to the ideal of that great Hebrew prophet. I might fill pages if I attempted to quote the words of Israel's most revered teachers on the subject; but it is needful to remind Jews themselves that their liturgy is steeped and saturated with the idea of the Mission. It is not too large an assumption to urge that so-called “orthodox” and “reform” Judaism are at

one in their reverence for the teachings of the Jewish prophets as to the Mission. "Ye are my witnesses" can have no meaning if the hope of spreading the truths of which we are the witnesses be excluded.

To avoid undue repetition of what I have written in former numbers of this REVIEW, and in the *Jewish Chronicle*, as well as in the *Fortnightly*, I would confine myself now to an aspect of this question which is likely to be misapprehended. It has been suggested to me by one or two whose devotion to Judaism is unsurpassed, that such a movement might produce the effect of drawing away from the synagogue Jews who are already weak-kneed and inducing them to join the Jewish Theistic Church, where obviously the service would be on Sundays and in English. An instructive feature in this most natural criticism is that it does not suggest that the movement would withdraw staunch Jews—only the weak-kneed or half-hearted ones. In other words, some Jews who now rarely or never come to synagogue, might be attracted by a weekly public worship conducted by Jews with the avowed object of teaching Judaism to the outer world. If, then, for the first time in their lives, such persons of Jewish birth are awakened to the dignity and to the efficacy of the Faith of which they are ruthlessly at present unmindful, the reactionary influence upon the Synagogue would be distinctly advantageous. No born Jew with a spark of hereditary and religious sense enough to bring him into such a place of worship as I have foreshadowed could leave it without an unspeakable accession of faith in the spiritual destiny of his race. If never before, he would then for the first time in his life perceive something of that transcendent miracle—*Jewish history*. The staunch Jew, on the other hand, would find in the spread of his faith an intensified obligation to maintain its integrity and to preserve such traditions as are indispensable for that purpose. The whole-hearted Jew is in no need perhaps of stimulus, for in his own person, as in that of his progenitors, his faith is still "as

a wonder unto many.” But the contagion of that faith, carried beyond the boundary of its hereditary depositaries, could never weaken the trust in God and the abiding love of infinite righteousness out of which the faith of others shall have grown.

Religion, unlike many things, is spread by contagion rather than by precept. Communion with God, as Judaism can teach, is an achievement to be sought by common human faculties ripened and purified.

The education of the world, as of the individual, as Bishop Temple has pointed out, has three stages: law, argument, and example. And he not unnaturally typifies these stages by the three great Jewish teachers: Moses, Isaiah, and Jesus.

It is rather from contact with the life of the idealized Hebrew that the strongest spiritual culture in Christendom has sprung than from its theology. There has grown up a kind of personal intimacy with some one who lived with God, and whom Christendom holds to be the foremost illustration to mankind of the possibilities of development in the realization of God.

From the Jewish point of view which such a propaganda as I have proposed would set forth, the value of the example of the idealized Hebrew would not become diminished, but enhanced. The immanence of God in the human soul which Christianity has focussed through the instrument of mediation would be found to be present in all its intensity without mediation. This would be a new message to Christians. They would be reconciled to the eternal Father no more by adoption, but by natural affinity and legitimate sonship. The supposed barrier between God and his creatures would vanish under the fuller revelation which Israel has always possessed that there is no conflict in the divine nature between his attributes of righteousness and mercy, justice and love. It would be seen from the inspiration and tradition of Judaism that the terrible conception of the Fall was a pious misappre-

hension arising out of an imperfect knowledge of God: just as in earlier times the patriarch had an imperfect conception of God's righteousness when he believed that the slaying of his son was demanded, and his conception rose when it was revealed to him that such an act was not desired.

The apprehension of the divine nature is of necessity capable of rising to fuller and nobler ideals as the human mind advances. The prayers of the mediaeval rabbis were not less intense than those of the earlier psalmists, but they were free from many ideas which disfigure some passages in the ancient psalms. Anthropomorphic figures of speech in relation to the Supreme Being have been gradually fading away from devotional literature. Their inappropriateness becomes ever more apparent as our ideas of the Deity expand. The greatest non-Jewish Unitarian teacher of this century has said: "We exchange a God with a 'throne' and a 'footstool' and a 'right-hand seat' and a left, for the Living Presence of a Universal Mind, looking into our eyes in all that is beautiful, and communing with us in all that is right¹." Here is complete religious fellowship between the spiritual ideal of the Jew and that of the non-Jew.

Is it not worth while to exhibit the results of a meeting of two spiritual waters, which have flowed ever so far through the ages out of one and the same source, and come at last together at the end of this memorable century of conflicting beliefs and of progressive knowledge?

Would it not be a distinct gain to civilization and to the development of the religious idea that there should be between Christendom and Jewry a channel of direct religious fellowship? Christians even of the advanced Unitarian school have been hitherto unfamiliar with the inner spiritual life of Judaism. I have proposed to make them acquainted with it. My proposition is that individual

¹ Rev. James Martineau, address at opening of Manchester College, Oxford, 1893.

Jews, whose attachment to the Synagogue is beyond suspicion, should hold services in the English language on Sundays, and deliver discourses that would at once present to the outer world the innermost faith of Israel.

Such services might be either held in the synagogue itself or in other buildings engaged or reared for the purpose. These congregations of English people not of Jewish origin should be in the closest alliance with the Jewish organizations of this country, though doubtless in the outset they would be initiated by independent individuals. No Jewish rite or custom should be introduced into such places of worship that would be calculated to retard the supreme object of the movement, namely, the adaptation of the Jewish faith to those who are not of the Hebrew race. In the fifth volume of this REVIEW I referred to the necessity in such a propaganda of avoiding all those forms which are merely the commonplace badges of an enforced isolation, such as the covering the head, the separation of the sexes, and the abstention of kneeling during prayer. The substance of the Jewish prayer-book, however, would be available, and in the highest degree essential. No better substitute for the Litany can be found than the ordinary daily Amidah. Nothing could be more significant of the universality of Judaism than its specific morning and evening prayer. Such items as these would need no amendment. The same remark applies to many of the prayers found in the volumes for the Day of Memorial and the Day of Atonement. The Shemang, that is the verses from Deuteronomy in the first paragraph, would be absolutely needed as they stand. And these words would constitute the sole form of creed to be recommended. On the other hand, there are a few selections from “Hymns Ancient and Modern” which would be useful for congregational singing. Those who might desire a more close connexion with the parent Synagogue itself should have every facility afforded them. I should be strongly opposed to any active steps to introduce the Jewish religion to any

Christian who reposes in any of the formulated creeds of Christianity. I would have it distinctly understood that our efforts are directed to fill a *gap* in the religious world, and not to assail any existing religious organization, whether Unitarian or Christian. No Jew would be of service in this cause whose fidelity to the religion and race of Israel was not loyal and whole-hearted.

Since writing the foregoing, I have had the advantage of hearing and of studying the address delivered by my friend Mr. Claude G. Montefiore at Manchester College, Oxford, upon "Unitarianism and Judaism in their relation to each other." The invitation to a Jew to "address a body of Unitarian students of theology at their central training-college at Oxford" is in itself a hopeful indication of the possibility of creating a direct religious fellowship between the Jew and the non-Jew. But an examination of the particular address (which appears on p. 240 below) will afford further illustrations of the idea that there are points of union which the Jew and the non-Jew have yet to cultivate. It would be beyond the immediate purpose of this brief preface if I were to enter into the field of thought which that address opens. I merely refer to it as an indication of the principle for which I am contending, namely, that the time has come when in England and in America the cause of religious development can be advanced by a definite alliance between the Theism of the people of Israel and that of non-Jews.

OSWALD JOHN SIMON.

APPENDIX.

(1)

I GLADLY pay my tribute of unstinted admiration for the lofty tone which pervades Mr. Simon's article. Its idealism is in striking and gratifying contrast to the materialistic

spirit that characterized another apologia recently published, which constituted a presentment of Judaism—with all the Judaism left out. I also willingly concede, that, at the first blush, the scheme he propounds for propagating the faith of Israel beyond the confines of the Jewish race has much to attract and fascinate. It would appear as though the realization of this project would free us from the reproach which Professor Max Müller levelled at us in his famous lecture on Missions, delivered by him in Westminster Abbey, Dec. 3, 1873¹. He asserted that the Jews, particularly in ancient times, never thought of spreading their religion, and that when in later days they did admit strangers to some of the privileges of their theocracy, they looked upon them, not as souls that had been gained, but as strangers (גֵּרִים), as proselytes (προσήλυτοι), men who had come to them as aliens, and that from the lack of this missionary spirit the days of Judaism were numbered. In a discourse I then published, under the title, “Is Judaism a Missionary Faith?” I disputed the validity of the Professor’s assertion. I showed, by reference to history, that we had at all times been willing to receive proselytes who came to us prompted by sincere conviction, but I pointed out the perils and disadvantages attending active propagandism.

Now, it is true, Mr. Simon has made it perfectly clear that the religion he desires to disseminate is not Judaism as it is commonly understood, an historic faith with sacred rites and ordinances, but simply a belief in the Unity of God and the observance of the moral law. But would not the realization of such a project be fraught with the gravest perils, some of which, in his enthusiasm, he seems to have altogether overlooked? Would not half-hearted Jews eagerly welcome such a religion, freed from the, to them, irksome encumbrance of ritual, but which they would still view as some form of Judaism, since it would be preached, to them, *permissu superiorum*? It will be remembered

¹ *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. IV, pp. 254, 319.

that Dr. Benisch, in his *Judaism Surveyed*¹ made a similar proposition, by pleading for the re-establishment of the order of the Proselytes of the Gate, and he admitted that his principal reason for this advocacy was his desire to facilitate marriage between Jew and Gentile. Now what is to be the religious practice of the offspring of such unions? Is it to be expected that they would celebrate the Sabbath or any of Israel's appointed times which their parent had been authoritatively permitted to disregard?

Much yet remains to be said on this head, but exigencies of space force me to pass on forthwith to another source of danger. Will not the divine service proposed to be established be viewed as a menace to the dominant faith? Is it wise, at a time when Anti-semitism is spreading far and wide, to inaugurate a movement which can so easily be misunderstood and so readily misinterpreted? It may be argued, Does not your caution—in reality but another name for cowardice—blind you as to your duty to those who are estranged from the formulated doctrines of Christianity? Why refuse them the solace of the pure and sublime faith of Judaism? My answer is, I refuse them nothing. Our sacred Scriptures are open to them as to us. Nor are our Synagogue portals closed to them. And if they need a form of divine service in the vernacular, Mr. Voysey's Theistic Church and Unitarian places of worship are prepared to receive them.

And there remains yet another argument to be touched upon. We justly deprecate Societies for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews, when the treasure and the energy devoted to this work could be so much more profitably and worthily spent in converting to humanity the seething mass of vice and depravity which festers in the courts and alleys of great cities. Should we not, by fostering the movement in question, commit a folly of a like character? Is there no mission work to be done by us in the West of this mighty city to redeem and to elevate

¹ Pp. 129, 130.

lives steeped in luxury and self-indulgence, and trembling on the brink of apostasy? Is there not sufficient work to be done in the East to raise to a consciousness of human dignity the victims of long-standing oppression and evil government? Are all our young ones efficiently instructed in the principles and practice of Judaism? Do we, by lectures and publications, diffuse an adequate knowledge of our history and the right appreciation of our literature? To this and to kindred labours our energy and enthusiasm should at present be consecrated, but not to a scheme in which the germs of mischief can, I submit, be palpably discerned.

H. ADLER.

(2)

MR. SIMON'S scheme for establishing a Church of Israel shows that he has felt the pulse of a young generation questioning the meaning and value of the inheritance which it was the endeavour of the past to preserve. He has seen that our triumphant emancipation is now working out its natural results upon us; that constant intercourse with non-Jews and extensive secular education must materially affect our opinions; that we, who are young and earnest lovers of our religion, are struggling with new ideas which we hardly dare to formulate, because they are contrary to all accepted traditions. Such are the notions that our separateness seems now merely external and artificial, our racial distinctiveness often scarcely perceptible, and our religious ideas almost identical with those of Theists and true Unitarians. Mr. Simon realizes also that we are not necessarily irreligious because less observant than our parents, and finally, that Judaism need not suffer at all by its extension.

It is impossible to retire again within the ghetto to escape from the disintegrating process of modern life. We, the future pillars of English Judaism, must therefore trust that the stability of our faith does not solely depend on

a separateness which is being worn down by two growing forces: education and toleration. No martyrdom, not even Israel's long martyrdom, proved more than the faith of the martyr, nor convinced men of a truth which their hearts did not reveal to them. The preaching of separateness and practice of intermingling make for painful doubts, not for a martyr's faith. We cannot all honestly accept, under modern conditions, laws which were the tree of life to our fathers. A great Jew said: "Some of you boast that your laws are much what they were a century ago! You have laws to regulate what has ceased to exist . . . which, through the change of human events, prove to be new impediments to the very purposes of the institution (the Synagogue), and for the new circumstances which have arisen you are without laws."

Surely, it behoves the faithful remnant, if truly concerned with the preservation of the faith, to recognize our increasing difficulties, and by relaxing severity to win back those who, through the force of new circumstances, will otherwise be inevitably swept away. A practical adoption of a wider Judaism would immediately bring back young Israel himself, and with him numberless proselytes whom the Jewish religion has in its turn influenced.

Thus Mr. Simon's Church of Israel will become the safeguard of modern Judaism. For Judaism, as we conceive it, is greater than the Jews. It is surely destined to be the faith of the future, because the true Jewish ideal is at last in complete accord with the spirit of the age. The true Jewish ideal lies behind beloved traditions and customs, links uniting a religious brotherhood, but by their nature of transitory value. The true Jewish ideal rests on two dogmas: the Divine Unity and the Messianic state, i.e. unity of law and the triumph of justice in this world, or, the unity of forces and belief in progress.

When, therefore, the Israelite of the Old Testament meets him who, having discarded the myths of the New Testament, believes only in what is common to both—in the love of one

God, in the love of justice, of mercy, and of truth—what marvel if this meeting be, not a reconciliation, but a recognition?

SYLVIE D'AVIGDOR.

(3)

EVERY theist must share the desire to bring the ideas and the life of religion before those who have them not, or who have sought them vainly among existing organizations. The general object, therefore, which Mr. Simon proposes, at once enlists the sympathy of the sincere believer. The question is, How far is it likely that Judaism can supply this want, and by what means? If, as is probable, in commenting on Mr. Simon's suggestions, I show that I am involved in the general ignorance of the spiritual life of Judaism, my remarks may at least serve to reveal the kind of difficulty which such a movement will have to overcome. I will refer only to two points, and will assume without discussion the existence of a sufficiently numerous class corresponding to Mr. Simon's description.

In the first place, it will be impossible for such an effort to evade the question of religious authority, because this is precisely one of the grounds of the estrangement from dogmatic Christianity which leads to uncertainty of belief and loss of interest in worship. Now it may be a great misapprehension, but a common view of Judaism supposes it to rest on two bases, neither of which can be accepted in its crude form by non-Jews. There is, first, the element of race; there is, secondly, a conception of a peculiar revelation embodied in the Law and the Prophets. To deal with the latter first. So far as the new religious teaching is to be founded on conceptions of the Hebrew scriptures analogous to the older pre-critical ideas of the Christian Bible, it will fail to attract those who are already repelled by the narrower notions of the Churches. It will be necessary, therefore, to determine clearly the significance of the Law and its institutions, on the one hand, and of the Messianic idea—in

whatever forms it may still hold its ground in modern Judaism—on the other. In this respect I do not see that Judaism can offer anything more than the Unitarians, though fresh voices may win fresh hearers. But it does appear to me that the element of race may be capable of new and effective treatment. Can it be disengaged from the physical basis which non-Jews cannot share, and converted into a permanent historic type of spiritual experience? By an extraordinary faithfulness, amid almost inconceivable sufferings, the Jewish people have preserved the apprehension of certain great primary religious truths. In so doing they must have laid up an immense store of moral achievement, of which, in the older literature, the Psalms of course supply the most splendid example. Can they utilize these reserves of moral strength in their religious teaching? Can they show that their inner life really rests not on an external revelation, but upon a continuity of experience for more than 2,000 years? Then they will have a foundation analogous to that which the Christian finds in the Church without its dogmatic embarrassments, and can appeal directly to the simplest religious consciousness.

Secondly, there are certain aspects of religious endeavour which have been regarded (rightly or wrongly) as peculiar to Christianity. Consider that attitude towards sin, that movement for redemption, which is implied in the words: "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Has this attitude been ever genuinely shared by Judaism? It may be that Judaism has been, by force of circumstance, compelled to concentrate all its force on its own self-preservation. But it would be interesting to the non-Jew to know how far Judaism has been able to inspire efforts like those of Francis of Assisi, of Wesley, or General Booth. From one point of view Christianity is a warfare with evil, physical and moral. Any fresh teaching which Judaism may have to offer will be likely to be tested by its applicability to new social ideals in which no race limitations can be recognized. The generosity of rich Jews

to their own people is well known. But those who are dissatisfied with the preaching of the Churches, and seek a religious guidance founded on the broadest facts of human experience, will ask for a universal and not a national philanthropy. If the time is ripe for new impulses in this direction to issue from the Synagogue, in line with that which some of us still feel to have constituted the great era for Western history more than eighteen centuries ago, then theists of all schools ought to make the new cause their own, and offer all the assistance in their power.

J. ESTLIN CARPENTER.

(4)

I CORDIALLY agree in Mr. Simon's theory of Judaism and its missions, and I think great service is done to the Jews by his view being constantly put before them—in as many different ways as possible.

The vicissitudes of the Jews in the various countries where they dwell—persecution, disabilities, poverty, wealth—have almost filled up their lives. Efforts on the one hand to throw off unjust civic restrictions, and on the other to build a wall of separativeness to guard their faith from destruction, have so occupied their thoughts and energies that the great bulk of them have never thought, and do never think, of their *raison d'être* in the world.

Even the section who pray to return to Jerusalem have only a dim notion of what they are to do there. As emancipation develops, the desire to leave the adopted country may proportionately lessen, and it is invaluable that Mr. Simon's ideal should, in anticipation of that circumstance, become generally familiarized in the Jewish mind.

But I do not think the time is yet ripe for any attempt to proclaim the mission of Judaism to the world at large. A much larger proportion of the Jews themselves must grasp it first. A little example is worth loads of precept. First let our people settle down among the nations enjoying

the fruits of emancipation as quiet, useful, unobtrusive citizens, earning their living in a variety of avocations.

I think it is most useful to impress on Jewish lads and girls that every one of them carries the banner of Jewish reputation, and that when they mingle with the rest of British youths in schools and colleges, workshops and factories, they need always to bear that in mind, and live up to it. That aspect of the Jewish mission might, I venture to think, be insisted upon with advantage from the pulpit at the autumn festivals, when the new year of school and industrial life is inaugurated, as well as the Jewish new year.

In short, to sum up, I think we want the true mission of Judaism preached to ourselves, constantly and persistently, in many forms and by many voices.

Mr. Montefiore and Mr. Simon have sounded the "silver trumpet" and led the way, and I hope and believe that hundreds of Jews and Jewesses will be helped and inspired by their ideal.

JULIA M. COHEN.

(5)

THERE are many to whom it must seem desirable that the Jewish race in this age—when everywhere, except in Spain and Russia, the spirit of religious toleration has triumphed—should resume their ancient task of exhibiting to the world an ideal of pure monotheism and of appealing to the nations to follow it. Only as missionaries of a higher faith did they in the past deserve the name accorded to them of the chosen people of God, and only as resuming their rôle as teachers of such a faith can they deserve it in the future.

For the age is not yet past when the rest of the world can learn from the Jews. I have often been asked by orthodox Christians to subscribe funds for the conversion of Jews, and have as often replied that in my opinion the Christians rather than the Jews stood in need of conversion. For Christianity is everywhere, save among Protestants, indistinguishable from the old idolatry. It is the cult of

a woman whose history, as maintained by those who elevate her into a goddess, is ninety-nine parts pure myth to one of fact. It is a worship by men of the works of their own hands, of crosses, of bits of bread and cups of wine, of images and pictures. These products of art, sometimes refined, but oftener coarse and foolish, are invested by their devotees with magical powers and properties. And even among Protestants the man Jesus has supplanted God at such a cost to reason and good sense, and in such defiance of the Gospel records, that a candid modern divine, Canon Gore¹, is found exhorting his brother clergymen not to juxtapose, but to keep carefully apart, the rival statements that he was merely human and that he was also God, lest they should empty the evangelistic texts of all meaning and value.

It is ungrateful to dwell on the intellectual shortcomings of men who too often excel our more critical selves in spiritual fervour and good works. All the greater therefore is the need to brace ourselves for fresh efforts and, if we can, ally ourselves with those who, like the reformed Jews, reject the pagan and mythical elements which survive even in reformed Christianity. In proportion as the critical appreciations of the Old Testament, already common among orthodox Christians, spread also among Jews, so will the latter become reformed Jews, between whom and Unitarians the only dividing line is the reservation of Saturday rather than Sunday for rest and meditation. There is no other important difference. For Jews have by their history no such prejudices against reading the New Testament in a rational way, as beset the modern orthodox divine, who throws the Old Testament to the wolves of criticism as if to divert their attention from the New. I cannot therefore but hope that Mr. Simon's dream of uniting in common effort the reformed Jews and the most critically minded Christians may some day be realized.

FRED. C. CONYBEARE.

¹ See *Dissertations on the Incarnation*, 1895, pp. 97, 103, 105, 189, 203, 206.
VOL. IX. O

(6)

THROUGH the courtesy of the editors I have been invited to express my opinion respecting the proposals of Mr. O. J. Simon, and it gives me much pleasure to respond to their invitation. These proposals appear to me extremely interesting, and calculated, if carried into effect, both to quicken the more spiritual impulses of Judaism itself, and to help in reviving the faith of some, perhaps of many, who have been repelled from religion by the insistence on dogmas which they are unable to accept. I have often wished that theists of every school, Catholic and Jew alike, would not limit their finest teaching to their own people, while against the outside world they defend what is special to themselves, but would really help the doubts and difficulties of the time by entering sympathetically into them, and setting forth with gentleness and love the more universal grounds of faith. There are many signs that this better spirit is beginning to prevail; and if the Jewish race has still in it the spirit of Isaiah, and can stand before the world with lips freshly touched by a coal from off the altar, assuredly I, as a Christian, can only rejoice, and hope that many a yearning soul will come and confess that God is present of a truth.

By way of criticism perhaps I may venture to remark that Mr. Simon seems hardly aware that Christians, though they may be very ignorant of modern Judaism, are quite familiar with the piety of the Old Testament, and that the immanence of God in the human soul without (as well as with) mediation would be "no new message," but is to many their most familiar thought. Even the Catholic has his hours of communion *solus cum solo*. Christianity has, no doubt, in the course of its history, incorporated much in its theology from the teachings of Greek philosophy, and much in its ritual from systems of sacerdotal mediation; but in its spiritual essence it is, at least as it appears to

me, the legitimate outgrowth and development of the finest and least sacerdotal elements of Old Testament teaching, which it sought to universalize by detaching them from national limitations, and especially from the legal portion of the Old Testament, which lay very close to the heart of the Jewish people. I cannot but think that a modern movement must be (I will not say carried out on Christian lines, but) similar in kind; and here Mr. Simon's proposals leave me a little in the dark. How far is any kind of observance of the Law to be put forward as an essential part of the religion? If the attempt be to make proselytes, in the old sense, I can anticipate nothing but failure. If, on the other hand, I am correct in supposing that the intention is to dwell on the great moral and religious principles of that monotheism which the Jews, and through them the Christians, have inherited from a remote past, we may reasonably hope that the dignity and power of an ancient faith, speaking to the world with a voice long silent, will find many a waiting heart, and bring it back to the reality of God. Surely, though we are so dull of heart to perceive it, there is a new outpouring of the Spirit, which is gradually drawing us nearer to the unity of faith.

In the foregoing remarks I trust that I have not unwittingly hurt any tender susceptibility. I have written frankly from my Christian point of view; but I think we have learnt in modern times to speak frankly without any violation of brotherly love.

JAMES DRUMMOND.

(7)

I HEARTILY concur in Mr. O. J. Simon's views regarding the importance and practicability of a Jewish “mission” at the present moment.

I have heard Jews object that though Judaism has a mission, its mission is a “life,” not a “message.” Why then were the older revelations of God always verbal ones?

Why were the prophets not dumb witnesses, converting Israel by their example and uttering no words? Judaism must recover the truth once familiar to it, that face-to-face speech, heart-to-heart communion, is the first and chief method of persuasion. "The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" If the ancient people of God had refrained from promulgating their mission in winged words, if they had left the world to infer from imperfect Jewish lives the perfection of life according to God's will, the world to-day would have realized far less of divine truth than it has done. It is rather arrogant to maintain that because I may be possessed of a noble doctrine, I must necessarily myself be the fittest for practically manifesting that doctrine. Ideally there should be an assimilation of precept and practice. But I do not see why the world should be deprived of good Jewish precept because there may be a certain amount of bad Jewish practice.

Secondly, I think that the Judaism Mr. Simon desires to preach will be found to fulfil the needs of many who at the present time are dissatisfied with current forms of religion. But Mr. Simon must consent to proceed tentatively. We need a further analysis of our moral consciousness before we can formulate the religion of the future. We rely too much on the results of old, out-worn introspections. Now it seems to me that the heterogeneous members of the "Church of Israel" would be in a happy position for making this analysis. I am certain that Mr. Simon is right in believing that if the religious consciousness of all honest men were analyzed, it would be found to contain almost identical elements. I am further certain that though far from all the common elements could be claimed as Jewish, nevertheless the resultant principles would find themselves more easily and fully expressed in terms of a purified Judaism than in terms of any other purified religion. "All wise men have the same religion, but wise men do not tell what it is," said the cynic. But in Mr. Simon's "Church of Israel" men *will* tell, heart will speak to heart, and it will

be seen that God's Spirit which moved inspired men in all ages, but most of all the Hebrew prophets, is still strong to save.

Will the Mission fail? As I conceive Mr. Simon's meaning, this question is irrelevant. One must face failure or one is no missionary. And when did the fear of failure deter Jews in their older missionary efforts? The essence of Mr. Simon's proposal is its hope, not its assurance of success. But I cannot see why failure is inevitable. For the members of the Church of Israel would not be all drawn from the cultured "liberals," i. e. from those whose adhesion to the movement would be due to intellectual scepticism. This class would no doubt form the backbone of the movement, but it needs flesh and blood too. A mission must have emotion as well as intellect. Whence would it come? From the lower end of the scale. Mr. Simon should not overlook those whose scepticism is moral and social—he should look to the toiling masses, nominally Christian or Jewish, but often without a satisfying faith. To them the mission of Judaism, with its strong doctrines of duty and righteousness, its moral earnestness, its cheery confidence in this world's possibilities of a sufficing and ennobling happiness, its faith in the purity and perfectibility of human nature, in brief, its ethical optimism—to some of them the mission might be of saving effect. In a church preaching these principles to these classes, I would stand by Mr. Simon's side, an ardent disciple.

I. ABRAHAMS.

(8)

IN offering a brief "opinion" on Mr. Simon's recent articles about the need, the duty, and the feasibility of "an active propagation" by Jews "of the faith of Israel beyond the confines of the Jewish race," I propose to *assume* that the religious condition of English society is such as he describes it. On the whole his description is perhaps fairly accurate. I therefore only propose to

ask, (1) Is such a forward movement desirable? (2) is it possible?

1. (a) It is clearly desirable for the outside world, assuming the *data*. Unitarianism may be too "Christian" for some people; "Theism" may be too polemical. Moreover, the "historic" element of the proposed "new religion" is obviously attractive. "Theism" may be started to-day and may perish to-morrow. The Universalist branch of Judaism, the proposed "Church of Israel" (*Fortnightly*, p. 587), would be constant. It would have the permanence and the vitality of Judaism itself.

(b) Such a Church of Israel, such a direct preaching of Judaism to the "nations," is in full accordance with the highest conceptions of Judaism and its mission. It could only do honour and good to Judaism itself. It would give it warmth and energy; it would give it an interest in life. Its mission would no longer be a mere lifeless dogma, heard about from pulpits, but unreal and unrealized; it would be something actual, living, tangible, a proof that all this boasting about a duty and an office and a service to mankind was no mere vapid, idle talk, but was at last being seriously meant, was at last being translated into deed. At present, when Jews talk of their mission, it is as if a man boasted of the possession of a jewel finer than any in the land, but kept it wrapped up in a thick duster so that none could see it. As to the argument that the "movement" would draw away "weak-kneed" Jews from the old Saturday to the new Sunday synagogue, it has been refuted by Mr. Simon himself on p. 180.

2. "Is it possible?" Here my doubts begin. I think that Mr. Simon's ideas and writings are seminal and germinal. And the condition of Judaism and of society is not unfavourable to these seeds and germs blossoming and bearing fruit. The fruit may not be exactly what Mr. Simon conceives it, but none the less will he, all honour and all gratitude to him, have helped to sow the

seed. I reverence him for his grand, prophetic faith in Judaism and in the purer aspirations of the second Isaiah. But I doubt the “movement” being capable of any realization now. I do not think we have the men. Moreover, it is still not clear (hardly even to Mr. Simon himself, still less to his readers) what the attitude of the new Judaism (if I may so call it) is to be towards several most important questions.

1. What is to be its exact position towards the Pentateuch and the Law?

2. What is to be its exact position towards the miracles of the Old Testament?

3. What is to be its relation to the personality and the teaching of Jesus?

4. What is to be its attitude towards the New Testament as a whole?

Mr. Simon has not fully, as it seems to me, thought out these all-important questions. And not only he, but Liberal Judaism in general is still uncertain and halting about them. They must, however, be definitely answered before the “new departure” can begin, and upon the character of the answers there probably depends the success of the movement. More intimate knowledge must be acquired of the present condition of Christian theology in all its phases. Even Mr. Simon sometimes talks as if modern Christianity were inextricably bound up with the old-fashioned dogma of the Fall. More knowledge, therefore, on the one hand; more clearness of attitude on the other. On the great questions mooted above, our thoughts and points of view must be more *thought out*. As the Germans would say: *Man muss Stellung nehmen zu diesen Fragen*. Mr. Simon’s articles will partly incite, and partly help, us to do this. I repeat again, all honour to him for his enthusiasm and his faith.

C. G. MONTEFIORE.

(9)

WHILE feeling that Mr. Simon has done a great service to the community by his recent article in the *Fortnightly Review*, I find myself at variance with him in his proposal to establish a Jewish mission or church for the benefit particularly of Gentiles whose religious cravings are not satisfied by the doctrinal teachings of Christianity. The proposal appears to be only the logical outcome of our convictions as described by Mr. Simon. Nevertheless, I do not think it is possible—as yet. It seems to me there are many *practical* objections to the scheme; of these I will deal here with three.

(1) It would prove a source of weakness to our own community. Mr. Simon himself anticipates this objection, though he hardly appears to appreciate its full importance. Half-hearted and indifferent Jews would find in the new church an excuse or justification for further indifference. They would feel a strong inducement to attach themselves to it and its very diluted Judaism, attracted by the prospect of belonging to a religious body, Jewish in spirit, which makes no irksome or inconvenient calls upon its adherents. Many would thus be lost completely to us whom we otherwise might win over—many who, were it not for the new church, might become identified as loyal members, if not as active workers, in the community proper. Indeed, I believe the mission would recruit its followers in larger numbers from born Jews than born Christians, and thus would stultify its own existence.

(2) We should expose ourselves to a deserved charge of attending to the mote in our brother's eye while neglecting the beam in our own. The great condemnation of the Christian missions to the Jews is, that they involve a huge expenditure of money and effort that could be far more usefully devoted to the work of humanizing, raising, and relieving the myriads of so-called Christians who, in our large towns, are in the toils of poverty and ignorance, or

are steeped in drunkenness and brutality. Let us not be guilty of the same error. We are not confronted by the same conditions as these among our poor, but we have our own internal problems too. On the one side there is the mass of foreign Jews whom it is our duty to patiently Anglicize, to teach to discard undesirable habits in thought and action which oppression has forced upon them. On the other side there are those brethren among the grown-up as well as the growing-up generation, to whom much in our form of worship does not appeal, and who are thus drifting from us, not always as a result of their own indifference. If we are to keep them for their good and ours, their requirements also need careful and loving and liberal treatment by our leaders. These are religious questions of moment in our own midst that have the first claim on our best thought and energy, for they are concerned with the preservation of the consciousness of our ideals and mission among our own people.

(3) I believe the establishment of the church would be resented by our fellow-countrymen, and might lead to a re-awakening of ill-will against us. It is true that our political emancipation is complete, but I seriously question whether the spirit of tolerance is sufficiently deep even in this land of liberty to permit Christians to regard with equanimity any organized attempt on our part to minister to religious needs outside our own community. I do not desire for one moment to cast any imputation upon the broad-mindedness of our fellow-citizens, but I must remark that we cannot expect two generations of tolerance to blot out completely the prejudice which has been the growth of centuries.

Mr. Simon's proposal is a lofty and spiritual one; but the time for active propaganda is not yet. We must be content for a few more decades to continue to work and impress, as before, by the silent force of example.

S. FRIEDEBERG.

(10)

O. J. SIMON'S advocacy of the re-establishment of the order of the Proselytes of the Gate is a proposal which contains the germ of such far-reaching possibilities and momentous consequences, not only for us of his race and faith, but for mankind at large, that it can neither be accepted nor dismissed lightly.

I agree that the true definition of the mission of Judaism as laid down in the Scriptures is the duty of impressing mankind with "the highest spiritual conception of God to which the creative human imagination has yet attained"; also, that from forces beyond its own control, the active participation of Israel in its mission has been in abeyance, but that nevertheless, by its unswerving fidelity to the religious idea through ages of martyrdom, it has borne eloquent, though silent, evidence of its faith in its mission.

It is incorrect, however, to infer that Israel has always been a passive agent. Jewish and Christian writers testify that at the dawn of Christianity Jewish proselytes were already numerous, and doubtless paved the way in no small degree for the spread of Christianity amongst the heathen nations. The conception of the Deity evolved by Christianity, that offspring of Jewish and heathen philosophies, was far in advance of those held by the Gentile world. The very fact that the Christian conception was so strongly tinged with heathen elements naturally facilitated its acceptance by Gentiles. Primitive man appears incapable of grasping a purely spiritual conception of Deity: he requires something tangible to his senses, whether it be a stock, stone, animal, man, or heavenly body. To account for the origin of evil, an infinite mystery to him, he evolves the idea of evil spirits warring against beneficent ones. The simple idea of a Deity who "creates both the good and the evil" for his own unfathomable purposes is incomprehensible to his understanding. Hence the religious idea of Israel at the dawn of Christianity found a world unprepared to grasp it

in its entirety, nor can we wonder at this, when it was only after a long probation of terrible suffering that Israel, to whom the revelation was made, became faithful to it.

For nearly 2,000 years the Jewish and heathen conceptions of divinity have been striving against each other to gain the upper hand in Christianity. An intellectual revolt against doctrinal Christianity has arisen in the minds of thousands of thoughtful men and women, who are struggling vainly for the Light now seen by them “as through a glass darkly.” I agree with Oswald John Simon that the outer court of the Temple should be rebuilt for such as these, and its gates be open to all who desire to enter of their own free will. Proselytism that seeks to disturb the religious convictions in which one’s fellow-men find the “peace that passeth all understanding” is to be deprecated as creating strife, but so also is the narrow spirit foreign to Israel’s mission that refuses to point out the path to the anxious inquirer who has lost his way.

The question is, Is the *time* ripe for such a movement? The reply depends on whether the *man* is forthcoming or not. He must necessarily be of the chosen mediumistic race and of the Jewish faith, and be impregnated with the Divine Spirit that will impel him outside of his own volition to proclaim his message. Mankind is waiting for him, the builder of faith on the ruins of worn-out creeds. To Oswald John Simon I would say, as was said of old, “Art thou Elias, or look we for another?”

ALBERT E. GOLDSMID.

(II)

SOME of the details of Mr. Simon’s scheme are, in my judgment, open to exception; but for his general idea I have nothing but warm approval.

I should like to deal with some objections to it that have been raised in my hearing.

It is urged that we Jews must first learn to live in the

spirit of our religious and ethical ideals, and that then it will be time enough to formally invite others to accept them. The contention is beside the mark. The question involved is not one of conduct, but of organized religious teaching. We Jews claim to be the depositaries of certain theological truths; the claim logically binds us to disseminate those truths. If we refrain, we are either insincere or selfish. The dilemma has been formulated more than once—notably by Professor Max Müller on a memorable occasion several years ago. The stereotyped Jewish reply is that we Jews do teach Judaism, and by the most effective of all methods—by living it. But is this the most effective method? Would not a direct propaganda be more effective still, to say nothing of the cumulative influence of both methods combined. The rate at which our theological ideas filter into the general consciousness, under present conditions, must necessarily be slow. Are we not bound by our duty to our mission to accelerate the pace?

An active propaganda is not necessarily an aggressive one. No one proposes an aggressive one. Mr. Simon's missionary is not going to stand at street-corners and bawl the saving doctrines of Judaism into the offended ears of the passers-by; nor is he going to drag Christians into the synagogue by main force. He will merely conduct a service on Jewish-theistic lines, at which all persons of any creed or no creed who care to attend it will be heartily welcomed. Nor will he attempt to teach Judaism in its entirety; he will confine himself to expounding its great theological ideas in the hope that "inquirers" may find in them rest for their souls. That there are many such inquirers is more than probable. I have a friend—a lady of considerable intelligence and religious fervour—who, having broken with Christianity, is, to use her own words, "searching for a religion." She declared the other day that the only religion that satisfied her was Judaism, but that she was prevented from embracing it owing to a lack of sympathy with its ceremonial elements. Mr. Simon's

services would be a god-send to such a woman. And she is but a type. There must be hundreds in London alone who, like her, would welcome the opportunity of identifying themselves with Judaism on its theistic side.

Indeed, Mr. Simon's plan, as I understand it, is practically identical with the proposal to revive the ancient order of Proselytes of the Gate, which the late Dr. Benisch urged with insistence and force many years ago in the columns of the *Jewish Chronicle*. The Rabbins were not afraid of such an institution ; why should we be ?

The argument that the creation of a Jewish Church would tend to detach the weaklings from Judaism has been demolished by Mr. Simon himself. He has also shown how inspiring is the reflex influence which the spectacle of the Gentiles, ranging themselves under the banner of Israel, would exert upon staunch Jews.

It is urged that an attempt to teach Christians Theism is superfluous, (1) because Christians do not want Theism ; their ideas, it is asserted, are slowly but surely tending in the direction of a godless worship of Christ, towards an agnostic Christianity : and (2) because there are agencies, like Mr. Voysey's Church, already engaged in the task. If the first contention is true—which I am not prepared to admit—then the need of some additional instrument for restoring to Christendom the God it has lost becomes evident. What a glory it would be for Judaism if it were to take a leading part in so splendid a work ! As to the second plea, why, I ask, should not the Theistic Church learn to look upon us Jews as active allies in the stupendous task it is attempting with such pathetic courage ? The more numerous the workers in the consecrated field, the earlier and the more bountiful will be the harvest. Do we not owe it to our Theistic comrades to be up and doing ? When our brethren go forth to war, shall we remain here ? I am bound to point out, moreover, that there are many religious inquirers, now intentionally holding aloof from Theism, who would willingly throw in their lot with *Jewish* Theism if they had the chance.

Surely there is something that appeals to the imagination in the thought of being associated with an *historic* religion, with a people that claims to have received a divine mission, and which has suffered, for its sake, lifelong agony. So far as its theology is concerned, Judaism has little more to offer than Theism has, but on the other hand it promises fellowship with Israel—a precious boon which an ever-increasing number of minds will eagerly grasp.

Finally, as to the danger of arousing anti-Jewish feeling. I do not believe that such feeling can ever be the result of a manifestation, on our part, of religious vitality. Quite the contrary is the case. It is quite true that there are malevolent people always ready to make our very virtues a grievance. But if these persons are to shape Jewish action, the only course left to us is self-effacement. Let us ignore this class of critics. In England, where the new movement is to be initiated, we can ignore them with ease. Religious zeal, even on the part of Jews, can command only respect from those whose opinion is worth having. It is the show of religious indifference that is the real enemy. The surest way for us to win confidence is to prove that we have faith in Judaism, and are loyal to the responsibilities which it lays upon us.

MORRIS JOSEPH.

(12)

MR. SIMON'S thoughtful paper will meet with general sympathy. He makes undoubtedly an honest attempt to return to an earlier and nobler conception. The prophets certainly regarded Judaism as a missionary religion. In the view of Isaiah, Assyria and Egypt are God's people no less than is Israel. In the psalms of the theophany God manifests himself to Jew and Gentile alike. It was even a reproach against the Pharisees that they compassed sea and land to make one proselyte. The Rabbis hold that Israel has been sown in the lands of their dispersion in order that an abundant harvest of proselytes may be reaped from

them. In South Russia an independent kingdom of Jewish proselytes persisted for several centuries. True, that in an age of persecution, sufferance became the badge of all our tribe, and we were forced to enter into our chambers and shut the door behind us. Now, however, a happier day has dawned, and if Judaism is still to justify its existence, it must do more than merely exist.

So long as monotheism is true to itself, it must be nobly intolerant of error. The stock argument that people can go to heaven by remaining staunch to the religion in which they were born is really irrelevant. If the world is to improve, it must be by going forward from strength to strength, and constantly attaining higher conceptions of God and duty. The Messianic idea, which has played so great a part in Jewish history, is no selfish forecast of racial predominance, but the fruit of a conviction that the perfect life will one day be realized by all humanity.

The particular scheme which Mr. Simon advocates is far more open to criticism. To differentiate between the religion of a Jew by race and of a Jew by adoption would be to create a new separation. Surely the old principle is better, that there should be one law for the homeborn and for the naturalized citizen of the Synagogue. Sooner or later we shall have to determine what elements of Judaism—doctrinal, ethical, and ceremonial—are alone essential both for us and others, and then press for their acceptance as a whole by the outside world. Mere reasoning doubtless will not solve the problem, nor is it needed. Time does the task for us. In religious life, as in physical life, the principle of the survival of the fittest holds true. Such ceremonial as justifies itself, by satisfying human needs, will continue; such rites as have outlived their time will inevitably die. Whilst much is hidden from us, it remains certain that Judaism will survive all changes, because in it are enshrined the principles of eternal truth. On the other hand, it is probably impossible, in this age of transition, to forecast the exact lines on which Judaism will

develop. Doubtless it will become finally a universal religion, suitable alike to Jew and Gentile. I distrust profoundly the policy of watering down the distinctive features of Judaism, which is, after all, no mere Unitarianism, but a historical religion, whose roots strike deep into the past. We shall not spread Judaism by cheapening the conditions of admittance into the fold. The nature of the demands which religion makes on man necessarily varies from age to age, but the regeneration of humanity has always been effected by those forms of religion which have required the greatest measure of self-sacrifice.

H. S. LEWIS.

(13)

I AM asked by the editors of this REVIEW to give my views on Mr. Simon's idea of a Missionary Judaism. It is an unwelcome task to me to criticize any form of religious enthusiasm, for indifference is the only thing in religious matters to which my sympathies are not responsive. Yet, as I feel sure that Mr. Simon's ideals are as mistaken as they are beautiful, and as impossible as they are mistaken, it seems right, when asked, to say why I feel so sure about it.

Mr. Simon believes that "large numbers of Englishmen are in need and in quest of a religion at once monotheistic and historical," and he proposes to supply this assumed "gap in the religious world" by "a weekly public worship conducted by Jews, with the avowed object of teaching Judaism to the outer world." "Obviously," says Mr. Simon, "the service would be on Sundays and in English," and, he adds, "no Jewish rite or custom should be introduced." Ethical lectures, in which Jesus is to become to Christians "the idealized Hebrew" and to Jews "an enhanced example" are to expound the "miracle of Jewish history" to a congregation of "people endowed with the religious temperament but unfamiliar with the inner faith of any creed;" and "complete religious fellowship between Jew

and non-Jew” is expected to ensue from the “exchange” of the God who was so anthropomorphically “near” to the psalmist and prophets and rabbis of Israel into “the Living Presence of a Universal Mind¹.” For my part, I can never see that even “anthropomorphic figures of speech” are more really lowering to ideal conceptions of the Deity than vague phrases. “Our Father which art in heaven,” from very spiritual need, may now and again be realized with too human a precision of parenthood or of heaven, but, at the worst, it is vividly realized. This, however, is a detail and may pass. The essential part of the scheme is that “the synagogue is to offer not the hospitality of guests, but the habitation of a home,” to “weak-hearted Jews” and conventional Christians—a “home,” seemingly, which is to be that strange thing, a creation and not a growth—and in which human brotherhood is to become the whole and not a part of the divine law. This is, I think, a fair summary of Mr. Simon’s idea, though it is but fair to add that *his* summary does but scant justice to his article in the *Fortnightly*, its necessary brevity denuding the idea of a good part of the ideal. On the wisdom or the policy of a Jewish attempt to proselytize I do not touch, it is distinctly from the religious and not from the expedient point of view that I look at it. And to me it seems, for all its beauty, a hurried ideal; a forgetting of the fact that “God

Fails never. If he cannot work by us
He will work over us.”

In his own good time he will see to it that his earth shall be filled with the knowledge of him, but he needs no Procrustean methods. Much we know may be read into a text by learned or enthusiastic commentators, but of all quotable pleas in support of his plan, surely the most wonderful is that chosen by Mr. Simon, “Ye are my

¹ This periphrasis is quoted by Mr. Simon from the Rev. James Martineau.

witnesses." In what conceivable sense can the meaning of missionary and witness be interchangeable? To me there is the essential difference between them of the fleeting footprints on the mountain¹ and the abiding shadow of a Great Rock².

Judaism is this unchanging shadow of the Rock of Ages, this restful shadow in the lands that thirst. "Our mere existence," says Mr. Simon in the *Fortnightly*, "is a propagation of our faith." It is—so long as we exist, as Jews. But it is distinctively as Jews that we must "witness," holding fast to the Law that was given to us as a discipline and as a trust, and bearing, with no pose of martyr or pretence of mission, the burdens which the God of the spirits of all flesh laid upon us, especially, for the expressed purpose, that "all peoples of the earth may know thy name as do thy people Israel³."

It seems to me a poor sort of way to "propagate" by chipping away little bits of "the Rock from whence we were hewn."

KATIE MAGNUS.

(14)

I HAVE read with deep and absorbing interest Mr. Oswald Simon's article on "The Mission of Israel," which breathes the same earnest spirit that marks all that proceeds from his able pen. Mr. Simon, however, does not indicate the particular means by which he proposes to carry his great object into effect. If I rightly understand what Scripture teaches with respect to Israel's mission (see Deut. iv. 6, 7), it is to be worked out through our faithful adherence to the precepts of the covenant of Sinai, and through the influences we exert on the world at large by our personal conduct and example. This is the doctrine of the mission of Israel which I have invariably preached to my congregation.

If Mr. Simon be of opinion that the objects he has at

¹ Nah. i. 15.

² Isa. xxxii. 2.

³ 1 Kings viii. 43.

heart would be furthered by the issue of a series of popular tracts, setting forth what Judaism really is, and correcting the errors and misrepresentations into which certain polemical writers have been betrayed by preconception, prejudice, and lack of knowledge, I would heartily participate in such a course of action. But I should be absolutely hostile to a conversionist propaganda, in any way akin to that which characterizes the London Society for the Conversion of the Jews to Christianity.

D. W. MARKS.

(15)

I HAVE read with warm interest and prevailing concurrence of feeling Mr. Oswald Simon's paper which you kindly sent to me, and the article in the October *Fortnightly* more amply treating of the same subject. As he himself placed the latter in my hand, I have, in returning it, reported to him the impression which it leaves on me, so far as it bears on his suggestion of a Jewish mission. If Judaism, as presented in the records of its origin, its authoritative code, and its historic working till the Temple fell, were identical with the "Judaism" of Oswald Simon and Claude Montefiore, I should concede to it a "mission" with hope as fervent as theirs. But they have emerged into a religion of spiritual insight and moral experience quite beyond the range, not merely of "the Law," but even of the ripest prophetic inspiration. To reach the springs of holy trust and loving self-surrender now, we must start, I am convinced, with appeal to our latest inward experience of conscience, rather than remain dependent on reported outward dictation of law and proclamation of judgment.

I avail myself, you see, of your kind permission, to content myself with a bare hint of my impression of the suggested movement.

JAMES MARTINEAU.

(16)

ALL must have welcomed Mr. Simon's article in the *Fortnightly Review* as a sign of the idealism and enthusiasm of its author.

The following thoughts occur to me with respect to Mr. Simon's suggestions.

Mr. Simon's aim is being fulfilled. The words of the prophet Malachi are truer now than they were when he spoke them: "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering." Through the work of the Divine Spirit, through God who hides himself from our sight, the time foretold as near or far by the prophets is drawing nearer. All Christians, from Catholics to Unitarians, would call themselves Monotheists. All would indignantly repel the charge of Polytheism. Their Monotheism does not take the same form as ours, but avowedly it is Monotheism. The ethical ideals of Judaism are also becoming more and more the property of all religions. It is often said that Christianity is identical with other worldliness. But in no age more than in ours has greater thought been given by Christians to the wants of the poor and the distressed. I know many Christians who think less of "salvation" in the theological sense than of making the world brighter and happier. The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the Chief Rabbi can stand on the same platform and plead for the same moral ends. Educated Christians, moreover, who do not call themselves Unitarians, often explain their dogmas in a manner which is not repulsive, philosophically, to those who believe in Judaism.

I do not agree with Mr. Simon that the world is yearning for a new religion. New religions do not come to the birth through the dissatisfaction which men and women may feel with the dogmas of the old ones. Christianity took the

place of the old religions of the Roman Empire because Rome was steeped in moral vice and corruption. It was not the objection to transubstantiation that gave Protestantism its power in Europe, but such blots upon the Roman Church as the sale of indulgences and the degradation of the clergy. When Rome purified herself at the Council of Trent, Protestantism made no real headway against her. There is much moral misery in the world, but all the churches, equally with the synagogue, are engaged in the work of stemming its tide. Mr. Simon has probably more especially in view educated Agnostics and Sceptics. I do not think that Agnostics and Sceptics are really so agnostic and sceptical as they say they are or as they think they are. They too bring their own pure offering. I do not know whether the prospects of Unitarianism and of Mr. Voysey's Theistic Church are encouraging to those who propose to start new religious movements. I fear, too, that we Jews have not a small proportion of Agnostics and Sceptics of our own.

I thoroughly believe that the noble prayer quoted by Mr. Simon will be fulfilled, that the world will ever grow nearer to the ideal of our prayer of the New Year and Atonement, that all men will form “one band to do God's will with a perfect heart.” But this does not mean, I think, that all the world are to become Jews in actual name. The fundamental truths of Judaism will prevail, but we shall best do our duty by fulfilling the duties which lie nearest to us. The enthusiasm of the enthusiastic in our midst must be guided, the indifferent must be stimulated, there must be union amongst ourselves, we ourselves must be one band.

I heartily agree with Mr. Simon in believing that the separate existence of Judaism is the best permanent witness to its truth. We can still be witnesses in our lives, in our conversations with Christian friends, in our public speeches and writings. Mr. Simon thinks we can be better witnesses by organizing a Sunday religious service not absolutely in connexion with the synagogue. He may try. He has the

energy, the idealism, and the enthusiasm to try. Such a service will be no temptation to the weak Jew who is on the point of leaving Judaism. It may be a stepping-stone for him, but not more. He will join in the end a Protestant or Catholic church, according as he lives in a Protestant or Catholic country. But if the movement spreads, there would be a great temptation for its Jewish leader gradually to identify himself with it entirely, and fall away from the synagogue and its traditions.

On another point I must congratulate Mr. Simon. I have always felt that the description of Judaism, as merely "a religious brotherhood," in the deeply reverent *Bible for Home Reading*, did not express the whole truth. Mr. Simon's description is satisfying: "Judaism is a religious brotherhood united by a common ancestry."

L. M. SIMMONS.

(17)

IF the question of a Jewish propaganda is to be debated at all, the discussion could hardly have been started in a more laudable spirit than that which runs through Mr. Simon's various contributions on this subject that have appeared in the *Jewish Chronicle*, the *Fortnightly Review*, and the JEWISH QUARTERLY. But neither the ardour, nor the sincerity, nor the dignified tone of the writer must be permitted to obscure the gravity of the issue raised by him in his presentation of the Mission of Judaism.

The titles of Mr. Simon's articles—"Mission of Judaism" and "Missionary Judaism"—justify insistence upon this point, that no definition of Judaism can be considered as satisfactory which does not make it clear that, while it contains some of the elements of Unitarianism and of Theism, it contains much besides and beyond. But it is the very features which differentiate it from other and even from allied forms of faith that Mr. Simon feels himself compelled to suppress or to ignore in his desire to commend

“the inner spiritual life” of his religion to those outside his communion. Briefly, he aims at the diffusion of Judaism. And how does he propose to achieve his end? By the dilution of Judaism. Whether any class of Christians or Theists, who are not satisfied with the inner spiritual life of their respective faiths, will be permanently attracted by an etherealized Judaism, even with its denationalized festivals, its Sunday services conducted by avowed Sabbatarians, its Jewish liturgies modified so as to make them appropriate for non-Jewish congregations¹, and its avoidance of every characteristic Jewish rite and custom, is exceedingly doubtful. What is not doubtful is that to bid a man spread Judaism in this fashion is, in Talmudic phrase, to tell him to “break the vessel, but not spill the wine.” The prophetic ideals to which Mr. Simon refers, high as they may soar, will generally be found, when examined in their context, to be anchored to the rock of the real. The divine promises in Isaiah lvi. 4-7 are made to those “who keep God’s sabbaths” in particular, and “who hold fast by his covenant” in general.

As to methods, we are somewhat awkwardly put about. We are to make a propagandist revolution with theological rose-water. It is to be distinctly understood that we are “not to assail any existing religious organization, whether Unitarian or Christian.” How I am to convince my non-Jewish hearers that my religion, or its inner spiritual life, is better than theirs, without giving them to understand that theirs is worse than mine, I cannot tell. How am I to recommend to Christian “inquirers” the Jewish conception of Monotheism without directly or by implication assailing the Christian conception? Indeed, Mr. Simon himself grows occasionally unconsciously militant. “The immanence of God in the human soul which Christianity has focussed through the instrument of mediation would be found to be present in all its intensity without media-

¹ *The Fortnightly Review* for October, 1896, pp. 586, 587.

tion. This would be a new message to Christians." Granted; but would not such a message be an attack upon existing religious organizations?

Let there be no misunderstanding then. Let the missionary door be open or shut, and Judaism be preached to the world frankly and fully or not at all.

The question remains: Because I believe my religion to be true, am I morally constrained to make it the basis of a universal religion? This depends upon the larger question, Is a universal religion, at this stage of human thought, a desirable thing in itself? Is it not rather the case that, especially in matters touching their spiritual life, men are so constituted as to be unable to see things always eye to eye, and that differences in religious conceptions are of God's own implanting? There is the somewhat parallel problem of nationality. The visionary's solution is, Merge all nationalities in one. Is there less wisdom with those who would have nations develop on their respective lines, and who call upon all true lovers of their kind to aim, not at an extinction of the national idea and an amalgamation of nationalities, but at the promotion of peace and goodwill among them all? So with religion. Imagine, too, the din and tumult, not always of the wordy sort, and the fresh terrors that would be added to life, if every religious sect yielded to the missionary impulse, exercised its equal missionary rights, and, salvation being in its keeping exclusively, carried on an internecine missionary warfare with every other sect! I very much doubt whether all the gains of the missionary spirit ever outweigh the attendant loss in charity.

Not that I would have my brethren in faith inactive in missionary work in other and, as they seem to me, more legitimate directions. Regarded as a mere question of religious economics, few things would be more wasteful than the suggested diversion of such missionary talent and energy as we possess from home to foreign service. In converting nominal into real Jews, in striving to preserve for

Judaism every son and daughter of the faith and making them worthy of their spiritual parent, we shall realize one part of our mission. The other part we shall fulfil, not by whittling Judaism away until every characteristic sign of it is obliterated, but by giving to the world from time to time clear, sound, and enlightened expositions of the great principles and teachings of our faith; by respecting and living at peace with all sincere followers of other religions, and, if possible, being merciful even to the insincere; by uniting with our fellow-men of all creeds in all works of pure humanity; and by never wearying, in presence of the endless diversities in the intellectual and spiritual features of the human family, to bear our testimony to the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. “*Many folds, one flock.*”

S. SINGER.

(18)

I FEEL the deepest sympathy with Mr. Oswald Simon's missionary enthusiasm, believing that the time has now come when the exposition, by able Jews, of the fundamental truths underlying their religion, and to which they have borne emphatic witness for two thousand years, may be a valuable contribution to the religious influences of the age. The monotheism of the Jews, their steadfast trust in a righteous God, their intense realization of the Invisible, of the immanence of God in the human soul, without mediation—these great principles harmonize with the convictions of Unitarian Christians; at the same time, it appears to me to be important that the two movements should be kept distinct, each working in its appropriate fields, and each tending to stem the wave of agnosticism which seems at present to be passing over England.

ANNA SWANWICK.

(19)

WHEN it is told that a quarter of a century ago the present noble proposition of Mr. Oswald Simon was

being discussed and advocated between the late venerable Dr. Benisch and myself, there will be no surprise felt at the eager delight with which I now welcome a practical revival of the scheme.

It seems to me highly advantageous to everybody concerned that the Jews of to-day should (without abandoning or abating any of their own exclusive duties and privileges) forthwith open their synagogues for further worship on Sundays.

And as they are set—in the language of Christian as well as of Hebrew Scripture—to be “a light to lighten the Gentiles,” it is necessary that the liturgy as well as the sermon should be in English.

It is also essential, as Mr. Simon points out, that the services should be conducted and the sermons should be preached by Jewish ministers who are still in closest alliance with the Synagogue.

Among the advantages which seem to me the most important are:—

1. The right fulfilment of the paramount obligation of Israel to be a blessing to the world at large by teaching them to know, to trust, and to love God; to teach them those spiritual conceptions of God which are the special inheritance of Jews, and which, for various reasons, are not held in their purity by the mass of Christians.

2. It will be a great advantage to attract, if possible, the thousands and tens of thousands who have become alienated from the Christian creeds.

3. It will be an unspeakable benefit to the Jews *themselves*, who have been so long forcibly prevented from all missionary effort, and in consequence have lost sight of the divine purpose for which they have been marvellously preserved, and now only recently have been emancipated in this country and in America. It will also, it is hoped, rouse a number of worldly, self-indulgent Jews (whom ease and prosperity have made unmindful of God) to a sense of their obligations and the intense value of true religion.

But all will depend on how the mission work of the Jews is done. And how it will be done must depend on the *principles* solemnly adopted at the outset and steadfastly maintained.

And here I feel bound to utter a caution which possibly may not present itself to other minds as so important as it seems to me. The Jews must not be tempted, by any hopes of winning adherents, into any compromise whatever; still less into the shadow of a shade of pandering to the popular idolatry and false sentiment about Christ.

“Ye are God’s witnesses,” and if you do not know by your own instinct the unswerving fidelity to which you are called and pledged, learn it forthwith of your own prophets, your Elijahs, your Isaiahhs, your Jeremiahhs, your Ezekielhs, who never for one moment wavered in their faithfulness and courage.

I cast no stones at individuals, but I do say that the cause of God, the one true God of Israel and of the universe, has been greatly hindered by those who, while professing monotheism, have preached a great deal more about Christ than about God, and have made the common mistake of raising a mortal fallible man like themselves into an object of unique and exclusive admiration.

Beware! Do your duty, but prepare to suffer for it. You cannot give unto the Lord that which will cost you nothing. And if you undertake this noble mission for the God of Israel, all the while intending not to forgo the praise and favour of men, intending to trim your speech to suit the followers of other gods, your mission will be worse than a failure—it will be ingratitude and treachery to God himself.

CHARLES VOYSEY.

(20)

WHILE I fully recognize the earnestness which prompts Mr. Oswald Simon’s proposal, I am bound to say that I see nothing to attract me in it. As a mere experiment in

spiritual activity, apart from any zeal for a particular religious system, it does not strike me as practical. The people to whom Mr. Simon desires to offer his diluted Judaism would be just as effectively appealed to by books and magazine articles as by the religious services he contemplates. As a form of Jewish missionary effort, the scheme strikes me as positively distasteful. It does not propose to make Jews, but only a sort of unattached proselytes, and its inevitable result would be a compromise which to every "loyal and whole-hearted" Jew would be profoundly mortifying. Thus, if only a selection is to be made from Jewish doctrines and the Jewish ritual, you cannot refuse to make a like selection from the doctrines and rituals of the Christian churches. If an idea common to Mr. Simon and to the straying sheep whom he has in his eye is better expressed in a Christian prayer, he could not exclude it from his service. Indeed, he admits as much when he proposes "a few selections from *Hymns Ancient and Modern*." Has he considered what the resultant service would be like? I, for one, should not care to see ever so small a corner of the mantle of Judaism thrown over it. We must either propagate Judaism in its entirety or not at all. A compromise would not only prove as lifeless as Unitarianism, Voyseyism, and other struggling movements which lack the inspiration of a great historic sanction, but it would inevitably weaken the claims of Judaism upon its indigenous adherents. A mercantile cynic might say that it would be an attempt to realize the Mission of Judaism with a fifty per cent. reduction.

But my chief objection to all Jewish missionary enterprise outside the pale of Judaism is that it would be a waste of valuable energy—of energy, too, which has an immense amount of work to do at home. The ultimate aim of all religion is to influence conduct, and until it can be shown by domestic results that our own methods are infinitely more effective than those of other creeds, what chance can we have of winning proselytes? That they are

more reasonable, and that they have been more successful, no one would maintain more strongly than I; but we have a great deal yet to do in our present field of activity—in the way of bringing the Jewish ideals home to Jewish hearts—before we can go to the Gentile with an absolutely convincing message of salvation. Mr. Simon himself discusses the possibility of weak-kneed Jews joining his Jewish Theistic Church, and thinks that they might find in it a way back to orthodox Judaism. It would be a very roundabout way. My impression is, indeed, that it would prove a halfway house to Christianity pure and simple. Surely Mr. Simon would do better to concentrate his missionary zeal on these weak-kneed Jews—and Heaven knows they are numerous enough!—than to hunger after the souls of weak-kneed Christians, who have plenty of Simons of their own to look after them.

LUCIEN WOLF.

(21)

OTHER dreamers of the ghetto have preceded Mr. Oswald John Simon in the aspiration to preach a universal Judaism. He is, possibly, the first to assert that the question has come “within the range of practical politics.” His article in the *Fortnightly* is brilliantly written and sincerely felt. But from the point of view of “practical politics,” his idea has perhaps missed the psychological moment. For, as he says, “scepticism and agnosticism are not permanent traits in the English character,” and, it might be added, the European character. Consequently we are at this moment face to face with a Christological reaction, fed by disappointment at the failure of science to live up to the vulgar conception of its powers and promises. Nevertheless, as a wandering Jew who has seen the manners of Englishmen and English cities, and talked with British clergymen and British churchwardens, I am of opinion that the corrosive action of modern criticism has irretrievably sapped the ancient conception of the Christ, and that the spasm of neo-mysticism has no real

vitality. Of itself, despite inevitable temporary reactions, the Church is working towards a human conception of Jesus of Nazareth, and even though he be still deemed divine, it is by a modern transfiguration of the concept of divinity. To this gradual transformation in the concept of Christ, it is not easy to maintain that the Jews have contributed anything *quâ* Jews. It is being wrought through the larger forces of the time. That the transformation will add immensely to the historic dignity of Judaism there can be no doubt. But had Judaism been only an historic memory, the transformation would have taken place just the same. What has Judaism then to say to the Christians of to-morrow or the sceptics of to-day? Well, all depends upon what you mean by Judaism. And the particular conception of this many-sided complexity favoured by Mr. Simon does not appear to me to contain any elements not already in Christianity. If it is the Unity of God, the Christians will get to that of themselves by re-reading and depolarizing the New Testament, which will take its true place in the Bible of humanity. And as for the sceptics, they have as much chance of finding comfort and repose in a transfigured New Testament as in a transfigured Old Testament. For note that Mr. Simon's pretence of offering the wandering Christian an old and tried article is a piece of self-deception. His Old Testament is very different from that Old Testament which, inspired in every letter, moulded for so many centuries the thought and faith of Israel. "Our ideas of Deity expand," he says. Well, but this is to accept evolution in religion. Mr. Simon really offers, not "an historic theism," as he pretends, but an historically-evolving theism. And as the route of this evolution passed independently through Christianity, Christians have as much right to claim the latest conception of God for Christianity as Jews have to claim it for Judaism, although it must be conceded to Mr. Simon that the terminus is on a main line from Hebraism while Christians have had to "change."

It seems to me that a vast deal of analysis is yet needed of all these words and conceptions in which we deal so glibly. Mr. Simon, for instance, offers seekers after God “an historic theism.” This is what they want, he assures us, and we are the proprietors thereof. To me there lurks in the phrase a deliciously subtle patronage of Deity. “We are the first monotheists.” As if God depended on our recognition! As if the modern searcher could not find him except by way of an ancient people to which he had cautiously and progressively revealed himself. Worship by all means, but for your own sake, not for God’s sake. Infect others with your emotional conception of the cosmos if you have the genius to do so, but do not, in emulation of the Christian missionary, offer them those dead propositions called truths, which are spiritual veneers, and not spiritual realities. I am sometimes tempted to exclaim that everything is true in religion except its truths.

Mr. Simon, to recapitulate, plays at once with the old and the new conceptions of Judaism, offering in the guise of an ancient God a modern God with an ancient pedigree. For my part, I cannot think that it is fair to the Christians to offer them Christianized conceptions as superior Jewish ideas. “The mission of Judaism” is either on specifically Jewish lines or on none at all. But as we Jews are just now unanimously disagreed as to what *are* specifically Jewish lines, and as we are in the very midst of a chaotic period of transition, it would almost seem better to wait a little longer—since we have possessed our souls in patience so long—so as to be quite sure what we have got to teach, before opening our class-rooms.

I. ZANGWILL.

By the courtesy of the Editors I shall have in the April number an opportunity of reviewing some of the foregoing criticisms.

O. J. SIMON.